

Message Text

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ORIGIN PRS-01

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FOR HODDING CARTER--FROM S/PRS--TRATTNER

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:SOPN

SUBJECT:DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING, AUGUST 2, 1977

NO. 6

1. PRINCIPAL ITEM WAS NORTH KOREAN DECLARATION OF A MILITARY ZONE CLOSED TO FOREIGN SHIPS AND AIRCRAFT. I WAS ASKED FOR DEPARTMENT'S VIEW OF DECLARATION AND SAID IT IS A UNILATERAL ANNOUNCEMENT WHICH IN NO WAY CURTAILS OR DIMINISHES RIGHTS OR OBLIGATIONS OF UN COMMAND OR OF U.S.; NOR DOES IT DIMINISH OBLIGATIONS OF NORTH KOREANS UNDER ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. I THEN RESPONDED TO SERIES OF QUESTIONS, EXTRACTS OF WHICH ARE WORTH NOTING AS FOLLOWS.

2. WHAT ARE YOU RESPONDING TO (WITH ABOVE ANSWER)? WHAT IS THE CHALLENGE? HOW DO YOU SEE IT, HOW DO YOU FRAME IT?
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ANSWER: I DON'T SEE IT AND I DON'T FRAME IT. I DON'T CHARACTERIZE IT EXCEPT TO SAY WE NOTED THE ANNOUNCEMENT AND OUR RESPONSE TO IT IS (AS ABOVE).

3. DOES IT ALTER STRATEGIC SITUATION ON PENINSULA IN ANY WAY? ANSWER: I'M NOT PREPARED TO CHARACTERIZE IT OR GET INTO THAT KIND OF FRAMEWORK ON IT. I CAN SAY THAT UN

COMMAND HAS NOT REPEAT NOT DECLARED A HEIGHTENED ALERT STATUS IN LIGHT OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT.

4. WHAT PROMPTS YOUR ENTIRELY NEGATIVE STATEMENT? WHAT HAS HAPPENED? ANSWER: I'M NOT SURE I'D ACCEPT YOUR PREMISE, OR YOUR DESCRIPTION OF IT AS NEGATIVE. I WAS ASKED WHAT OUR RESPONSE OR FEELING ABOUT NORTH KOREAN DECLARATION IS, AND I'VE ANSWERED THAT QUESTION. IF YOU WANT TO CHARACTERIZE IT AS NEGATIVE, THAT'S YOUR PRIVILEGE.

5. IS THIS A STATEMENT OF CONCERN, OF PROTEST, A WARNING? HOW ARE YOU GOING TO TELL THE NORTH KOREANS ABOUT THIS? THROUGH THE PRESS? ANSWER: I SAID I WOULD LOOK INTO WHETHER THERE WOULD BE ANY KIND OF COMMUNICATION OF THIS THROUGH SUCH A MECHANISM AS PANMUNJOM MEETINGS. BUT I DON'T WANT TO CHARACTERIZE THIS AS ANY KIND OF STATEMENT; I WAS ASKED FOR U.S. VIEW OF THE DECLARATION AND THAT IS WHAT I AM CONVEYING TO YOU.

6. IS THIS ACTION IN ANY WAY A CONTRAVENTION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW? ANSWER: I'VE ALREADY NOTED THAT THEY DO HAVE AN OBLIGATION, IN OUR VIEW, UNDER ARMISTICE AGREEMENT. UNDER OTHER INTERNATIONAL LAW, WE AND MANY OTHER NATIONS EXERCISE FREEDOMS OF NAVIGATION AND OVERFLIGHT BEYOND 12-MILE TERRITORIAL SEA AND WE DO NOT RECOGNIZE RIGHT OF ANY NATION UNILATERALLY TO REGULATE NAVIGATION AND OVERFLIGHT ON HIGH SEAS. END EXTRACTS.
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7. I DECLINED OFFER OPINION ON WHETHER NORTH KOREAN DECLARATION JEOPARDIZES EXISTING EQUILIBRIUM OR RAISES DANGER OF NEW DISPUTE BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH. I ALSO NOTED, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, THAT UN COMMAND PROTECTION

FOR VESSELS PLYING BETWEEN MAINLAND OF SOUTH KOREA AND ISLAND GROUP OFF KOREAN WEST COAST IS STANDARD, AND CONSISTS OF GUNBOAT ESCORT. CHRISTOPHER

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